

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

1. (Currently amended): A laser working apparatus for effecting optical ablation working by irradiating a work article with a laser light with a pulse emission time not exceeding 1 picosecond from a laser oscillator capable of continuous emission of a light pulse of a large energy density in space and in time, with [a] the pulse emission time not exceeding 1 picosecond, the laser working apparatus for effecting optical ablation working comprising:

a light intercepting control means, disposed in a light path of laser light with the pulse emission time not exceeding 1 picosecond from the laser oscillator to the work article, for selecting a state where the laser light with the pulse emission time not exceeding 1 picosecond can be irradiated to irradiate the work article or a light intercepting state where the laser light with the pulse emission time not exceeding 1 picosecond cannot be irradiated to the work article,

wherein said light intercepting control means is heated by receiving irradiation of laser light with the pulse emission time not exceeding 1 picosecond at the light intercepting state,

wherein the laser light, irradiating to and absorbed by said light intercepting control means, with the pulse emission time not exceeding 1 picosecond does not reach an ablation threshold value of energy density at which the work article is worked

~~wherein control means for controlling the irradiation of said laser light is provided in a position not affecting the temperature control of said laser oscillating~~

~~portion and a configuration is provided for controlling the irradiation of the laser light continuously emitted from said laser oscillator by said control means thereby effecting optical ablation working on the work article.~~

2. (Currently amended): A laser working apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said light intercepting control means is provided outside the laser oscillator or in a chamber separate from a laser oscillation chamber in the laser oscillator.

3. (Currently amended): A laser working apparatus according to claim 1 or 2,

wherein said light intercepting control means ~~is~~ comprises a light intercepting device capable of transmitting or intercepting ~~said~~ laser light, and a configuration is provided for irradiating the work article with a predetermined number of pulses by ~~said the~~ light intercepting device thereby effecting optical ablation working.

4. (Currently amended): A laser working apparatus according to claim 3, wherein ~~said the~~ light intercepting device is arranged by an electromagnetic mechanical chopper.

5-10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently amended): A laser working apparatus according to claim 1 or 2,

wherein said light intercepting control means is arranged by a light interception control device capable of repeating the transmission and interception of the

transmitting light with a frequency smaller (or a period longer) than that of the consecutive light pulses emitted from ~~said~~ the oscillator, and a configuration is provided for irradiating the work article with the consecutive light pulses at a predetermined interval by ~~said~~ the light interception control device, thereby effecting optical ablation working.

12. (Currently amended): A laser working apparatus according to claim 11, wherein ~~said~~ the light interception control device is arranged by a mechanical rotary chopper.

13. (Currently amended): A laser working apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the time ratio of transmission and interception of the light by ~~said~~ the mechanical rotary chopper is set by the shape of a shielding plate of ~~said~~ the mechanical rotary chopper.

14-34. (Canceled)

35. (New): A laser working apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the light path reaches the work article from the laser oscillator through a photomask illuminating optical system, a photomask and a photomask pattern projection imaging lens, and

wherein said light intercepting control means is disposed between the laser oscillator and the photomask illuminating optical system.

36. (New): A laser working apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said light intercepting control means is provided with cooling means

for cooling a portion heated by receiving irradiation of laser light with the pulse emission time not exceeding 1 picosecond at the light intercepting state.

37. (New): A laser working apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the cooling means is a gas blowing member for blowing gas to the heated portion.